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The Journal of The Children's Music Network



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Safety and Sanctuary

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Music in the Time of Corona

As waves of school closings and concert cancellations swept the nation this past March, the CMN member listserv lit up with urgent questions about What to Do. Of course, the community responded by discovering ways to exploit technology and ingenuity so they could temporarily replace the irreplaceable experience of live music making. Page 3.



Publishing Your Picture Book

Like many educators and artists, I've had a few ideas for picture books kicking around in my head for years. I suppose it's inevitable. This past fall I finally decided to make my long-ignored dreams of authorship a reality. Page 14.



The Kindness of Sanctuary

We measure our lives through the people we encounter as we make our way. The friendships and personal connections we make are really what gives meaning to our lives. Page 19.



Put Your Seatbelt On

This song delivers a crucial safety message in a groove- and fun-filled package that will speak to children everywhere. With its call and response form, the community can join in the fun. Page 21.



🎵 To The Ones

"This three-part round literally came to me in a dream. My father passed away at the age of ninety-eight this past fall, having outlived my mother by almost thirty years." Page 24.



🎵 Put Your Mask On, Honey

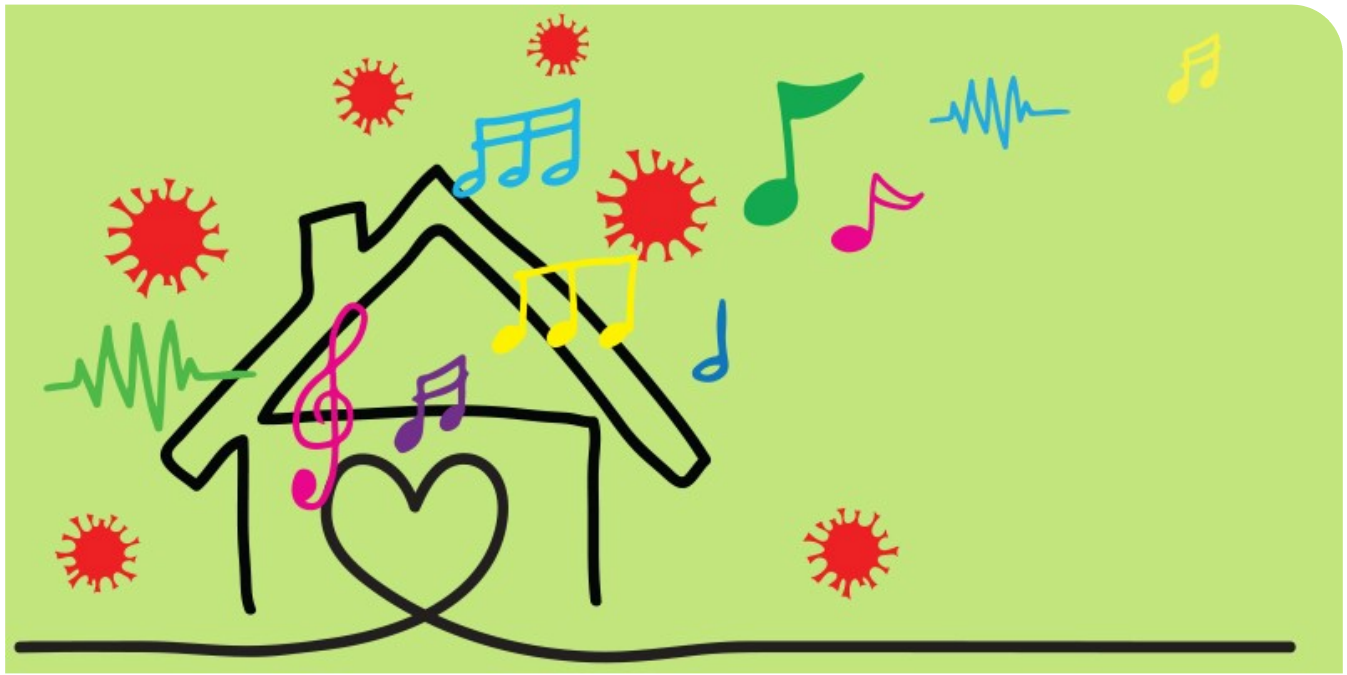
"I wrote (this) just to have a fun way about thinking about this whole mask issue. I thought that if it were seen as fashionable, then maybe we'd all be more willing to wear what makes a difference in the long-term health of all of us." Page 26.



2020 Magic Penny Award

The Children's Music Network is pleased to announce Fred Rogers as the 2020 Magic Penny recipient. David Newell, who played postal deliverer Mr. McFeely (named after Fred's grandfather) on the Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood TV show, will accept this posthumous award on behalf of Rogers. Page 29.

Cover photo: House nestled within the fork of two pathways, surrounded by woods (photo by Barry Louis Polisar)



Music in the Time of Corona

As waves of school closings and concert cancellations swept the nation this past March, the CMN member listserv lit up with urgent questions about What to Do. Of course, the community responded by discovering ways to exploit technology and ingenuity so they could temporarily replace the irreplaceable experience of live music making. And the community was just as quick to share tips, ideas, updates, how-tos, and all manner of help for each other.

I asked some folks to share their Music in the Time of Corona wisdom with the PIO! readership. Here are four short articles about making the most of the tools available to keep up those vital connections with children and families. —Ed.

Facing Up to Facebook Live

by *Joanie Calem*¹

Long, long ago, in a previous lifetime, when I worked as a Jewish-Arab community worker and not a musician/music teacher, I had terrible stage fright. I had always played music, but for myself. When I became a music teacher, I would get super nervous before every class, which basically meant that I wasn't sleeping any night of the week. At some point, something switched—I was so exhausted it had to—and I stopped worrying about doing everything according to my own strictly enforced standard of perfection. I started having fun with my music teaching. A few years later, I read an interview with Arlo Guthrie in *Sing Out!* magazine about his experience of performing with Pete Seeger and learning to overcome stage fright. Arlo related how Pete approached every audience as though he knew ahead of time that they were all friends, just friends that he hadn't met yet. He was warm and relaxed; he invited them to have fun with him; and of course, as we all know well, he always

invited people to sing along. This was the epiphany that I had been waiting for! Ever since reading that article, I have truly adopted that approach to live performing, and though I do occasionally still have stage fright, it is usually the butterflies of anticipation rather than the dragons of dread.

Enter March 2020, and the age of COVID-19. At first, I was as boggled as everyone else about what to do, watching every day of my life empty out of all of my classes, lessons, workshops, conferences, and performances. But I quickly realized, *Oh, right, we are not at all isolated anymore*. We are required to stay home and physically distance, but we really don't have to socially distance, because we've got What's App and Facebook and Messenger and Google Hangouts and Zoom and Microsoft Teams and . . . what have I forgotten? We have all these different ways to connect live with friends around the world. Imagine if COVID-19 were happening pre-Internet. *That* would have felt like isolation.

After the 2016 election, I had participated in a number of concerts put together on a Jewish Facebook Live page called "Harmony in Unison." I am not a well-known name and I knew that I wasn't a big pull, not someone that people would see an ad for and make time to hear. But I remembered what Arlo had said about Pete, and I put that to use in the world of Facebook Live: you don't know who is out there, and you're not interacting the way you would with an audience that you can see, but you can certainly assume that anyone watching is a friend—perhaps a friend that you haven't met yet.

And indeed, all of those Facebook Live concerts were a blast, and I did make new friends.

So, fast-forward to March 2020. On the day that every one of my regular weekly preschools contacted me to say they had shut their doors (i.e., the day that the governor of Ohio announced that preschools and child care centers had to close along with K-12 schools), I contacted the directors of my various schools and sent out a notice to my mailing list that I would be doing weekly Facebook Live concerts. There was an inrushing of gratitude, and I realized once again the incredible value of the work we do. The kids who were used to seeing me once a week are still seeing me once a week. Many of them are now watching with their parents, who were never before present in

my classes because they were at work while their children and I were at school. The songs that I would have been singing in classrooms, I am singing online. The suggestions for additions for zipper songs that I would have been soliciting, I can still solicit, and I get the answers viewers swiftly type into the comments. At the end, we all use the comments to say farewell until next week.

I know that many artists have created tip jars and memberships so that people can only see the show if they have paid. I honestly don't know the technical way to do that, but I hear colleagues saying that they are doing very well financially with their online concerts. I admit that I am squeamish about asking for money in that manner, so I haven't, but every week, a few parents do choose to pay me.



Joanie performing on Facebook Live

The only thing that is challenging for me is making sure that I sing an entire song without getting distracted by the conversations happening in the chat. I liken this to live performances when kids and parents are talking in the midst of a song: I have to really focus to keep the song going. I have learned how to do that in live performances, so I hope that I will get better on FB as well.

Other than that small thing, I find doing FB Live concerts one of the silver linings of this period, and really enjoyable. Though I can't see my audience, I know they are out there, and it sure seems like they are having fun and are glad that I am doing this. I am able to maintain a presence with the children and families that I have the joy of spending time with every week, even when we can't be together physically. I am thrilled that some friends have found ways to monetize their FB Live concerts, and happy that people are paying them and continuing to value the arts and music during this odd time we are living in.

So, if you are a performer who has a Facebook page, and you haven't done a FB Live concert yet, I encourage you to give it a try. I bet you will have a blast!

At Home With Sponsored Concerts

by *Susan Salidor*²

A week into the stay-at-home order, I'd already performed a handful of free morning concerts and classes on Facebook Live. I'd begun asking for tips or donations, and I'd set up a special URL with my name on my PayPal account to make tipping easier. I also created a Venmo account with the encouragement of my twenty-seven-year-old daughter Hannah, who thought it would be the platform of choice for the parents of my preschool students. (She was right: Parents who tip usually choose Venmo.) I have also offered free Happy Birthday videos to children who will not be celebrating birthdays with classmates. I've recorded and sent about twenty of these, and a few parents have tipped me.

I was delighted when I began to receive tips, since I had no expectations, and the reality of lost wages was just beginning to take hold. Hannah created a lovely graphic, which I began using immediately to promote the daily show, titled "Songs of Comfort and Joy." Although I am grateful, the tips do not begin to make up for my lost income.

Side note: After the 2008 recession, I turned my career in children's music toward more teaching when concert bookings started to lag; libraries and children's museums, for example, began to use in-house employees for their music programs. I was fortunate to find preschools that believed in the importance of quality music and movement for their students. The regular paycheck (September to May) and not having to hustle for concert work were welcomed changes. It's also been great to be on the same schedule as my husband, a high school English teacher who is off in the summer.

It became clear I needed to at least *try* to generate more income, so I created an extra Friday Family Concert that would be sponsored by able and willing families. I had no idea if this would work, but I started asking for sponsors on my morning show and posting sponsor requests on Facebook (FB), which is the platform I use for reaching out to families.

Another side note: A few months ago, Hannah began helping me grow my professional page on FB, driving families and fans to that page instead of my regular Facebook account. With her help, we've doubled the number of people who Like and Follow my work there.

I came up with a reasonable plan that would require eight families to pledge \$25 each. This meant I would earn \$200 for a forty-five minute concert once a week. (This is far below what I would charge for an in-person concert, but hey—I didn't have to leave the house!) Families stepped up, and Hannah created a second poster that lists the families and can be changed weekly as sponsors change.

To date, I've performed three Friday Family Concerts. These concerts are free and open to the public via FB Live, as are the daily 11:00 a.m. shows, but the family sponsors are acknowledged and thanked personally. My hope is that the families feel good about helping to provide more music for young children who are homebound.

We are going into week five of staying home in Chicago, and I will once again announce the Friday concert and ask for sponsors. I am also thinking of offering music classes for a fee to families, now that I have officially been laid off by my schools. I have been following the efforts of fellow CMNers in this regard, deciding which platform is best, how many families to include in one class, and so on. I'm hoping to promote these private music classes in the next few days.

If you choose to follow my example of sponsored concerts, you will need to promote them and the opportunity for sponsorship constantly. This did not come easily to me as I have limited brain capacity for business things. I'm much more interested in composing and performing and enjoying the company of young children and their amazing teacher. I remain grateful for the virtual company of CMNers and their generosity of spirit in all things. Good luck to us all as we navigate the unknown.

Making Videos During Sheltering Times

by *Valerie Leonhart Smalkin*³

In normal times, I would have started with lighting, lighting, and lighting! But I'm learning that there are no real rules for anything in these sheltering times. There is no right or wrong way to make a video. One of my favorites was made by Grand Maloy Smith, with a flashlight in his closet, "[Waiting for the Good Old Days Again](#)"⁴. Or here's another, with creative lighting by Fred McNaughton: "[What's Your Superpower?](#)"⁵

So, my new No. 1 rule is CONTENT. Or, as Steve Martin said, "Be so good they can't ignore you." Ask yourself: *Is it a good song? Do I have valuable information to share?* If not, wait.

My No. 2 rule is CONNECTION. It really doesn't matter too much what you look or sound like in these sheltering times. It's the connection you make with your viewer. You really must pretend there are people on the other side of the camera and talk to them, share with them, and get personal.

Still, even with great content and connection, the technical details—camera, sound, and lighting—do need to be in order.

Camera

My long-time TV producer, Pete O'Neal Sr., and his talented son, Pete O'Neal Jr., tell me that after years of carrying around heavy cameras for the local news stations they now often use—ready? An iPhone. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me. Also, if you

must use the laptop or computer built-in camera, there are inexpensive webcam settings apps that let you adjust brightness, white balance, contrast, saturation, and more. Here's the [Apple Webcam Settings app](#)⁶.

Sound

Sound quality does make a difference. I want clear, non-tinny, non-hummy, warm vocals, please! Here are the simple ways to accomplish that goal.

First, **use the iPhone and be close to it when you record**. In order to be looking straight down the barrel at the viewer, I position the iPhone in the non-selfie mode so that I **cannot** see the display. That way I look at the camera lens, and not myself, and avoid appearing to the viewer like I am not looking at them. (Again, in the COVID-19 era, that might not make a difference. People are accustomed to conversing via video conference with each person looking past the other.) When I cannot see the display, I make sure I know where the edges of the video frame are, and I stay inside that imaginary frame or stage. Also—and this is a tad tricky—when you are recording with the non-display side facing you, you will want to go to Settings, select Camera and then select Record Stereo Sound so that your camera records from the mic on the same side as the camera lens. Conversely, if you are recording from the selfie side, where you can see the display, deselect Record Stereo Sound so that your iPhone uses the mic on the display side.

Second, **connect your studio recording microphone to your iPhone**.

This is a little trickier because while your audio interface to your computer connects to a plain old USB slot, the iPhone does not have a USB slot, so you need an adapter. I use Apple's Lightning to USB 3 Camera Adapter (Figure 1) to connect my Tascam US-16x08 USB Audio/MIDI Interface to my iPhone while recording. You do have to check which version of USB slot you have, an older version or the latest. There are also products that claim to connect any mic to the iPhone, but I have heard some horror stories along with the success stories. So, I just go with what Apple provides.

Finally, if none of this paragraph makes any sense to you, go back to the first option: **use the iPhone and be close to it when you record**.



Apple's USB 3 Camera Adapter

Lighting

Lighting, whether straightforward or creative, really is vital. I tend to like a good deal of light under my face. I was pretty pleased with my lighting in this video:



Video: Silly Goose & Val Live.

The quality of the video is poor because it was a Facebook Livestream. Compare the quality of that video to one filmed, edited, and then uploaded:



Video: Silly Goose & Val Cuban Dance

In both cases, the lighting is far from perfect, but it's not terrible either! Here's a picture of the lighting I used for "Silly Goose & Val Live." I put scarves over all the lights because the lighting gets too white.



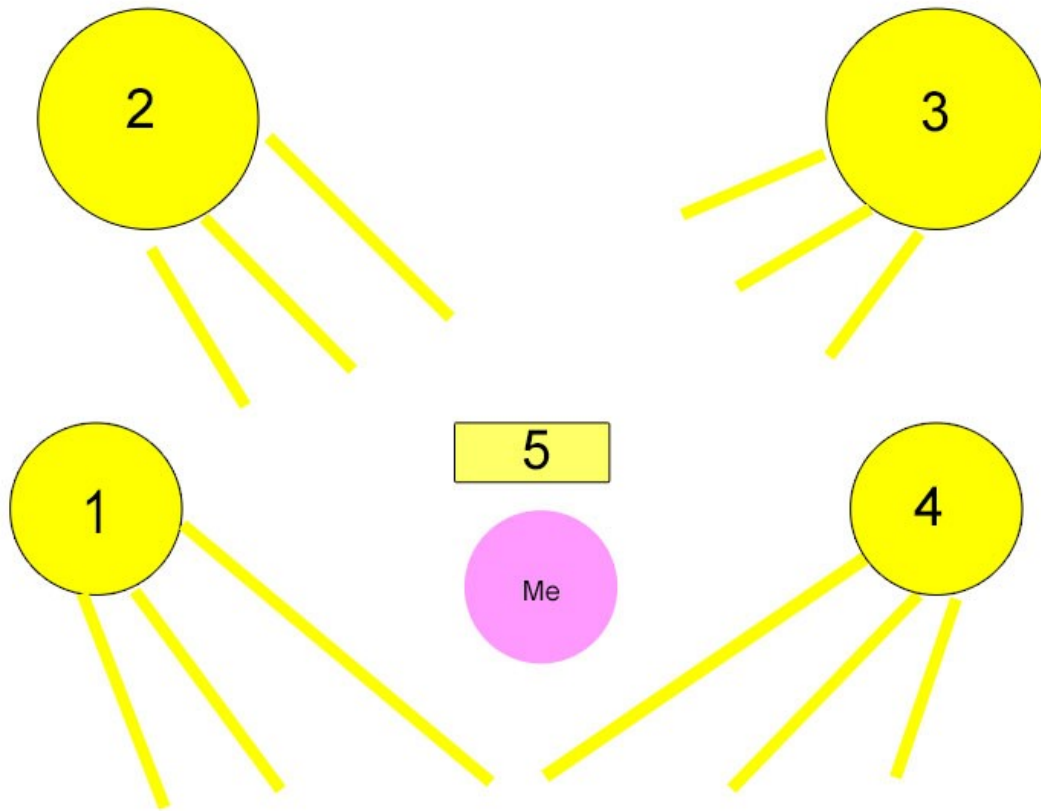
Pano picture of lighting setup from performer's point of view

The higher Lights 2 and 3 light up the front of me. Light 1 and 4 light up the wall behind me so that my shadow is not too visible. And Light 5 (bottom center) is my "look younger" light, filling in my eye bags. Robert Strong tells me that I should put Light 5 to the right or left of me creating a slight shadow and adding depth to the picture. Which should you go for? Depth or the absence of eye bags? Your choice.



Lighting up the wall behind the performer

Here is how it looks from a bug on the ceiling's point of view. This setup is particularly important for green screen work.



Floor plan of lighting layout

And the result! A nice clear picture without too many shadows!



Final result

Or, you can just go outside under a tree on a sunny day. That's the best lighting ever.

If you want to know more, I strongly recommend watching [Marlene Hielema's Video Expertise for Teachers and Bloggers](#)⁷. She has a great [video on lighting](#)⁸ and another [video on white balance](#)⁹.

Happy videoing!

Fair Use and Distance Learning

by [Lisa Heintz](#)¹⁰

Recently, I noticed an unusual uptick in the number of messages my online business, Little Songbird: Songs for Learning, was receiving. It seemed that pre-K through grade 3 educators are anxious for guidance and clarification regarding the use of copyrighted material (i.e., children's music purchased from Little Songbird) on the Internet now that they are expected to begin distance learning quickly and without much preparation or experience.

"May I please post this song on Zoom for my students? I need to know by NOON TODAY!"

"Is it legal for me to share these songs with my students now that my school district is switching to distance learning?"

"I want to use the songs we've been singing in school to keep it as familiar for my students as possible, and I start online tomorrow. Is it OK for me to share the songs I got here?!"

As an early childhood educator turned "edu-preneur," I know how important music is to everyday curriculum. It is the goal of Little Songbird to serve the education community by providing quality children's music that can be incorporated into the general curriculum. So, it seems natural to want to assist these frantic teachers who were trying to do the right thing by seeking permission to use the songs they needed for their work.

Here's the kicker: The technical answer to all those earnest questions may actually be NO.

Not because I don't want to support educators; they are my business's target audience. But fair use (the principle that copyrighted material may be reproduced without permission if the use meets certain criteria) has been associated with several myths about its interpretation. In short, as a vendor, I have no right to grant such permission to anyone, even under the most reasonable circumstances.

After first considering the overwhelming nature of what was happening for educators, students, families, and artists, my next thought was that the sudden launch from classroom to online platforms could be a boon to artists as their work was utilized in more public formats, and teachers would share their favorite artist's songs, dances, and books with fellow struggling teachers "out there in cyberspace." At a time when artists struggle to be heard, or receive living wages for their music, the idea seemed encouraging.

My initial plan was to respond quickly by creating a convenient blanket temporary and limited agreement that clearly stated the parameters for permission to use and post songs:

Who: Only the single purchaser

What: Only songs purchased through our site

When: Through June 2020 to allow all schools to complete their academic year

Where: In-person or online classrooms

How: By signing and returning an agreement and promising to remove the music from all platforms by the deadline

To accomplish this, I would also need to create an opt-in agreement for artists to sign, allowing their work to be used online in these new and unexpected ways. I'd also need to create a list of artists who had opted in and what specific songs or albums they were willing to share in this manner.

Almost instantly, I realized the potential for chaos, errors, and the further loss of control over their own work my talented artist-colleagues might experience. After consulting with several of them, it became evident that many valued maintaining control over their music more than potential exposure or fan-base growth. While some were pragmatic about the nature of online music use today and were open to my proposal, in the end I felt it was wisest to continue to gather input from my colleagues before bursting onto the distance learning scene as quickly as the teachers.

Despite my temporary retreat, I believe this is a pivotal moment for educating the educators regarding fair use, copyright, and the more recent **Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act (T.E.A.C.H.)** of 2002, which enables public school educators to move their lawfully obtained teaching materials from face-to-face classrooms to online video conference platforms. I now readily share my [Fair Use & Clarification graphic](#)^{11*} as well as a [TEACH Checklist](#)^{12*}, and ask each enquirer to **reach out directly to the artists/authors** whose work they wish to use in order to get permission to do so. For now, this seems to be the most direct and fair way to manage music requests, though I am still entertaining other artist-friendly and teacher-friendly options.

With thousands of sites removing paywalls from content to make it more accessible during this period of online teaching, the sea of copyrighted material has grown exponentially in just the past month. So how do we, who are tasked with providing quality content for online learners, navigate these ever-shifting waters? As content creators, what should you allow educators to use in their work online? As educators, what is permissible to use? How? For how long?

However you use music with children online, the best plan is to educate yourself about the laws and acts intended to support artists and authors (copyright law) and those that support educators (fair use, TEACH). Artists, learn as much as you can about the intent of content use as well as the intent of the protections afforded school teachers online. Seize this time as a "teachable moment" to both encourage educators to use your work as part of their daily online curriculum and educate them on how it can be done wisely and fairly for all involved. Educators, learn as much as you can about content publishing online as it pertains to the work you want to use, and about the importance of the limitations in place to protect the creators of the work you appreciate enough to want to share with students and parents. These rules can be mutually beneficial if you understand how to employ them reasonably and fairly.

**Note that these documents were created only as a guide for appropriate use of copyrighted material and do not represent, provide, or replace legal advice in any way.*

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1. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/joanie-calem.aspx>
 2. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/susan-salidor.aspx>
 3. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/valerie-leonhart-smalkin.aspx>
 4. <https://youtu.be/BFzwfVtMkq8>
 5. <https://www.facebook.com/fred.mcnaughton/videos/10157856973586777>
 6. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/webcam-settings/id533696630?mt=12>
 7. <http://www.imagemavenvideo.com/free-video-training>
 8. <http://www.imagemavenvideo.com/lighting-webcam-videos>
 9. <http://www.imagemavenvideo.com/white-balance-color>
 10. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/lisa-heintz.aspx>
 11. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FRAnMMc6J-r4OfJsg0YD18KPDb2oG-ZkOEkdCdfzTp8/edit?usp=sharing>
 12. https://drive.google.com/open?id=1HN2JEw9TRGCCOkLc_kwEHYPz2VUCUitJNPYQ7YI2acw
 13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNHI7C6nF7E>



Alina and Mi Amigo Hamlet at the SCBWI Prairie Writer's Day Conference in November 2019

Publishing Your Picture Book

by [Alina Celeste](#)¹

Like many educators and artists, I've had a few ideas for picture books kicking around in my head for years. I suppose it's inevitable. As creatives who work with children, we are surrounded and often captivated by them. This past fall, however, I finally decided to make my long-ignored dreams of authorship a reality. While my first book has yet to be published, I have already learned a lot, and I'm happy to share the resources and lessons I have acquired.

First, the writing.

Writing

Thanks to my years as a songwriter and educator, I felt pretty comfortable getting my ideas down on paper, but, as with most media, picture books have their own set of rules, conventions, expectations, and limitations. After a few false starts, I decided the best way to learn how to navigate these tropes was to take a class on picture book writing. It was my first truly good decision in this process.

I was lucky enough to be in Chicago and found a class at the venerable [Newberry Library](#)² called "Picture This: Writing Picture Books for Children." It was affordable and met once a week for seven weeks. If you are in a major metropolitan area, chances are you too can find a class like this. There are plenty of online options as well. [The Writing Barn](#)³ is well-respected and offers many online classes. Take a look at [KidLit411](#)⁴ also.

The first thing I learned was to discard my idea that I could simply jot down a few sentences to make up my twenty-eight-page picture book and call it a day. The writing process for picture books is just as involved, just as detailed, and just as demanding as writing a much longer work. It is common to write seventeen, eighteen, even twenty-five drafts before you are done. This is not a quick process, nor should it be. With any luck, you are creating a tangible work of art that will be loved and revisited by children for years to come. I'll admit, though, realizing my little idea was not ready for the big time was a bit of an adjustment.

“The writing process for picture books is just as involved, just as detailed, and just as demanding as writing a much longer work.”

My teacher, [Esther Hershenhorn](#)⁵, was (and is) a dream. She is a published author of several books and a deeply knowledgeable and passionate scholar of all things picture book. She offers seminars and classes year round, not only in Chicago. She opened my eyes to the process of picture book writing with love and precision. I highly recommend her.

In class, one of the many topics we covered were the ways to get published. For an original story, it really comes down to two avenues. Before I get into details, please note that I describe these processes as I understand them for an author who is not illustrating their own work. If you are an author/illustrator, there are fewer steps for you. See notes about that at the end, but as I myself am not an illustrator, I can't say as much about it.

One more note before we begin. The absolute first thing you should do, no matter the route you choose, is join the [Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators](#)⁶ (SCBWI). They are the largest organization of their kind in the world. They are helpful, friendly, active, and chock-full of resources. The only organization I can think of that compares with its welcoming, helpful, and sharing attitude is CMN. Join. Interact. Reap the benefits.

After you've got a story and illustrations, you'll need to make some decisions about how and when to publish your book.

First Route: Self-Publish

There's a lot to be said about self-publishing. It has never been easier. Websites like [Upwork](#)⁷ and [Fiverr](#)⁸ make finding an illustrator easy to do. You can find artists just entering the field, seasoned professionals, and everyone in between for every price point you can imagine. You maintain control over the look and feel of your finished book *and*, because you are paying for the illustrations outright, you get total ownership at the end of the process.

Once you have text and illustrations in hand, the fastest and most direct way to self-publish is to use a company like [BookBaby](#)⁹ to print yourself some copies and then head out to local indie booksellers and convince them to carry your books, while also offering them at your shows, in your storefront, or on your website. You could also take a page from the book of member Susan Salidor's husband, Jay Rehak, and start your own publishing house. (Check out [Sideline Ink Publishing](#)¹⁰.)

The second-fastest way would be to go through something like [Amazon's self-publishing arm](#)¹¹. You can publish directly to Kindle, with other options as well.

As with any product you create, you will have to market, market, market. Reading blogs; local children's librarians; social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Goodreads; and your local schools all can serve as valuable marketing avenues. Also, if you have a built-in audience already, such as hundreds of students at various schools, self-publishing could be a great way to provide more content to your already-existing fans, while potentially attracting new fans.

“If you have a built-in audience already, self-publishing could be a great way to provide more content to your already existing fans, while potentially attracting new fans.”

The two main pros of self-publishing are that you get to control the entire process, and you get to keep 100 percent of any profits you make. Self-publishing has even led to “widestream” success; for example, the infamous *Fifty Shades of Grey* series was initially self-published, as was the work of middle-grade fiction author Jessica Burkhart, and she's sold 1.5 million books.

Both of these authors ultimately went a more traditional route, however, and next, I break down how that works.

Second Route: Traditional Publishing

This is the dream of so many of us: to be a published author, our book listed in places like the *New York Times*, featured in bookstores, beloved by teachers and children, librarians, and grandparents. It probably seems like you have it made if one of the “big five” publishing houses¹²—Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group, Harper Collins, MacMillan, and Simon and Schuster—chooses to publish your book. Even with a smaller, indie publisher, such as Enchanted Lion Books, it might seem that much of the work detailed in the self-publishing route is done for you: they set up book tours, get your book reviewed, and arrange for it to be featured in bookstores and at fairs.

The disappointing truth is that none of the above is guaranteed or even likely. But let's start at the beginning. You've taken a class. You've written a manuscript. You've shared it with trusted friends or classmates. It's funny or sweet, unique or heartfelt, or all of those qualities. The point is, you need to share it with the world. Now it's time to write a query letter. This is at once a simple step and a complicated step that numerous workshops, classes, articles, and anxiety-ridden Twitter threads focus on exclusively. Here's a recent article on writing query letters¹³ to get you started.

Once you've got a rough query, you can either send your manuscript and query directly to editors or to literary agents. If you send to an editor, you'll get a yay or nay about whether they'll publish, and maybe a published book. If you send to an agent, you'll get a yay or nay, then a bunch of waiting while they query editors, and then a published book (maybe).

If you're tempted to skip the middleman, please note all evidence suggests that working with an agent almost certainly gets you a bigger advance. Also your agent will likely know way more than you do about the ins and outs of negotiating, which editors are looking for which kind of books, where your most likely audience is, and so on. On top of that, you can write your next masterpiece while your agent is knocking on figurative and literal doors for you. A legitimate agent will only get paid when you do. If one agrees to take on your book, they are

putting their own incomes on the line, which means they believe in you and you'll have a seasoned pro in your corner. That in and of itself is valuable in the world of the arts, which is so filled with rejection.

Traditional publishing also makes it more possible for your book to be carried by large, chain bookstores, like Barnes and Noble, and included in their publicity campaigns. You have people to help guide your work, create the marketing campaign, and pay for the expense of actually publishing physical copies. These are all very good reasons to go traditional.

Now for the cons: The first downside is that traditional publishing takes a long time. Querying agents easily takes a year. Finding a publishing house extends many months after that. Then you'll get your advance and the publisher will begin publishing—which will easily take another year or two.

This leads me to the second con: Unless you are an author/illustrator, the publisher will not want you to provide illustrations or even, in most cases, to share your opinions on them. Your manuscript should do everything needed to paint the story in someone's head. That someone will be an illustrator hired by the publishing house, and you may never even meet them. You're also unlikely to see their work until after it is completed. That said, many editors do choose to involve authors in some way with the illustrations, especially if there is a cultural aspect to the story. Typically, though, you are meant to "stay in your lane" and leave the illustration to the experts.

“Publishers look for authors who have a demonstrated following on social media already, or who are willing and able to do a lot of their own marketing.”

Now for the third con: Traditional publishing does not mean you will get a robust marketing budget and that someone will plan a tour for you or set up interviews. Often, you still have to do much of that on your own. In fact, publishers look for authors who have a demonstrated following on social media already, or who are willing and able to do a lot of their own marketing. The publishing house buys your manuscript, hires an illustrator, and assumes all the other costs of making your book a reality. They pay you upfront with the understanding that you will be an active participant in making your book a success. Go back and read the section on self-publishing. The part about Goodreads and other social media, the part about walking into indie bookstores and pitching your book? You still need to do all of that if you want your book to sell. In short, some of the work is done for you with traditional publishing, but not all of it. You get a team, not an army.

If you've come this far into my article, you are probably feeling a little disheartened. It's easy to think that once you are lucky or hard-working enough to write a manuscript that people want to read, your work is done. Much like in the music industry, that couldn't be further from the truth.

There are a few bright points, however. Picture books are one type of medium that are still doing healthy business. People still seek picture

“Picture books are still doing healthy business. There is still nothing like the magic of holding a beautiful picture book in your hands and sharing it with a child (or children) you love.”

books and buy them, unlike CDs, every day. There is nothing like the magic of holding a beautiful picture book in your hands and sharing it with a child (or children) you love. Picture books last for years, not only physically, but in the hearts and minds of the people who adore them.

I'll wrap this up as I started: Check out SCBWI—any questions this article has raised can be answered in their vast archive of resources. Whether you choose to publish your book yourself or try the traditional route, SCBWI has a lot to offer in addition to providing a community of fellow writers and illustrators to learn from and commiserate with.

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1. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/alina-celeste.aspx>
 2. <https://www.newberry.org/adult-education-seminars>
 3. <https://www.thewritingbarn.com>
 4. <http://www.kidlit411.com/2014/01/kidlit411-writing-courses.html>
 5. <http://www.estherhershnhorn.com>
 6. <https://www.scbwi.org>
 7. <https://www.upwork.com>
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 12. <https://blog.reedsy.com/largest-book-publishers>
 13. <https://blog.reedsy.com/picture-book-query-letter>



Gazebo in the woods (photo by Barry Louis Polisar)

The Kindness of Sanctuary

by Barry Louis Polisar¹

I originally shared these thoughts on a Facebook posting in the summer of 2019 and was asked if they could be included in this issue. It seems almost quaint to think back on that time, but I'm thankful that the events of that summer took place when they did—and not now, as our world has changed. Hopefully what I had written a year ago has relevance to the current crisis and I am happy to "Pass It On." —BLP

After my last major school concert tour ended in the Spring of 2019, my wife and I opened our home to friends from out of state who needed a place to stay as they tended to their brother who was struggling with the end stages of Parkinson's disease. They stayed with us off and on for a couple months while they spent their days down at the hospital, and ultimately at a local hospice center.

These friends are part of my origin story. I have often said (quoting John Hartford's song) "I wouldn't be here if I hadn't been there."

In the summer of 1972, my friend Mary and her folks, Ruth and Jay, invited me to join them on a cross-country driving trip from Maryland to Arizona, right after graduating from high school. The family was meeting Mary's two older brothers, Dean and Mark, and Mark's wife Kathy, for a week in a rustic cabin on top of Mt. Lemon, outside of Tucson. There, Mark and Dean would play guitar every night and we'd all sing together. I was seventeen years old, and when I came home from that trip, I bought a guitar, determined to learn how to play.

I began writing songs as soon as I learned three guitar chords.

The kindness of my friend and her parents did not end with that Western trip. I spent the better part of the next two years at their family home in Adelphi, singing and playing music with them almost every night—and more often than not, staying for dinner. Eventually, each of Ruth and Jay's children set off on careers that would serve those in need: Mark as an attorney for those who could not afford one, Mary as a social worker, and Dean as an attorney working on Native American and environmental issues.

Having the family in our home for a few months in the spring and summer of 2019 resonated with me on many different levels. It was great to be able to offer our home as a refuge and a sanctuary—and to be able to share meals and quiet moments on our porch in the evenings, going over the day's events when they returned from the hospital. The last weekend before Dean died—and a month after his wife tragically died from her *own* illness—I brought my guitar when I visited him and we spent a couple afternoons singing the songs we all used to sing together.

It was a full circle moment, going back forty-seven years.

We measure our lives through the people we encounter as we make our way. The friendships and personal connections we make are really what gives meaning to our lives.

All of this is just a reminder that in these turbulent times we live in, there are still opportunities to make a difference and live a life of purpose, to let go of any resentments or anger we hold against life's personal injustices, and to be thankful for everything we are able to celebrate.

One never knows what rippling effects a friendly smile, an open hand, or an open heart will lead to. I know that the kindness of Mary's family led me to this place.

When a friend or family member dies, one has to take stock. When two people die within a month, one has to reflect deeply on our own lives and how we will spend the time we are given. The greatest gift we can give ourselves is to be aware that our lives are connected to each other and to every other thing around us. We benefit from the experiences we share and the experiences we encounter with those on our paths. When we extend our hand to others or offer a welcoming embrace—like Mary's family extended to me when I was younger—we truly become holy.

Every one of us makes personal choices as well as political choices. They are reflections on who we are as people. We can build walls and enclosures that shut others out—or we can choose to be welcoming and caring when some greater force sends people to our doorstep in need.

People cross our paths daily with true gifts, reminding us of the good fortune of living each day with a full and joyful heart. The connections we make with friends—as well as those we make with strangers—reflect who we really are as people and as a nation. It should inform the debate about how we respond to the immigration issues at our border and to so much more.

To paraphrase a line in a song by the pop singer Jewel, "In the end, it is kindness that matters most."

1. <https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/barry-louis-polisar.aspx>



Put Your Seatbelt On

words by Kisha Kenyatta and Groovy Nate¹ (Elnathan Starnes), music by Groovy Nate
© 2020 Groovy Nate

This song delivers a crucial safety message in a groove- and fun-filled package that will speak to children everywhere. With its call and response form, the community can join in the fun. Nate tells us:

“This song was in my ideas library for years. The message is simple: Put Your Seatbelt On! A PSA with a strong go-go beat! We’re talking about Little Benny and the Masters meet Tangerine Dream meet Junkyard Band meet Stockhausen. Featuring [CMN member] Uncle Devin—the children’s drumcussionist—on drums and percussion, ‘Put Your Seat Belt On’ has the groove to make you move. Buckle up and enjoy the ride!”

The song has a singing rhythm, and the best way to make it your own is to listen to Uncle Devin and Groovy Nate’s version. Then, of course, if you do perform it, be sure to give them credit, even though you will make some changes to fit your circumstances and those of fellow performers.

Thank you, Groovy Nate, for making the safety of children a priority!

1. <https://www.groovynate.com>

Put Your Seatbelt On

words by Kisha Kenyatta and Groovy Nate (Elnathan Starnes),
music by Groovy Nate
© 2020 Groovy Nate



Introduction

Buckle Up Nate (Say What?)

Buckle Up Nate (Say It Again!)

Buckle Up Nate (Say What, Y'all!)

Buckle Up Nate (Oh Yeah!)

This is Groovy Nate, with Uncle Devin, we have a special message right here.

Verse

To be safe in the van, taxi, or car, (Put your seat belt on!)

No matter if the trip is near or far, (Put your seat belt on!)

With the car seat attached and the belt secure, (Put your seat belt on!)

We will have a safe trip, rest assure! (Put your seat belt on!)

Groove

Sit on down, sit on down, sit down

Buckle up for safety!

Ooh ah, ooh ah, ooh ah!

Oh, yeah!

Uncle Devin on the drums, holdin' down that pocket.

Hey Uncle Devin?

Yeah?

Why don't you take verse two.

Will do!

Go ahead!

I'm putting myself and my family first. (I put my seatbelt on!)

I'm reflecting on how much our lives are worth. (I put my seatbelt on!)

Adults, teens, children, and babies. (I put my seatbelt on!)

The seat belt laws are for our safety, so (I put my seatbelt on!)

Groove

Sit on down y'all, sit down

Buckle up for safety!

Ooh ah, ooh ah, ooh ah

Oh! listen up, listen up!

When you hear me call out your group,

Put your seat belt on all right?

Oh yes!

Buckle up! Buckle up! Here we go!

Girls! (Put your seat belt on!)
Boys! (Put your seat belt on!)
Ladies! (Put your seat belt on!)
Men! (Put your seat belt on!)
Parents! (Put your seat belt on!)
Grandparents! (Put your seat belt on!)
Uncles, Aunts! (Put your seat belt on!)
Everybody put your seat belt on!

I get my toys ready and before the car goes, (I have my seat belt on!)
I'm playing in the car, looking out the window (With my seat belt on!)
I'm talking to my parents and listening to music (With my seat belt on!)
I'll be safe in case of an accident because (I have my seat belt on!)

Groove

Groovy people sit down!
Groovy people buckle up for safety!
Ooh ah, ooh ah, ooh ah!
Oh YEAH!
I like to see you with your seat belt on,
So one more time I'm gonna call out your group all right?
Oh yes y'all!
Buckle up! Buckle up! Here we go!

Girls! (Have their seat belts on!)
Boys! (Have their seat belts on!)
Ladies! (Have their seat belts on!)
Men! (Have their seat belts on!)
Parents! (Have their seat belts on!)
Grandparents! (Have their seat belts on!)
Uncles, Aunts! (Have their seat belts on!)
All of us have our seats belts on!

End Groove

Sit down!
Buckle up for Safety
Hey, Uncle Devin, we forgot something.
What did we forget?
Well, we're buckled up because we're going into space!
Ah, that's right, I love it!
10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 . . . LIFT OFF!



To The Ones

words and music by Nancy Silber
© 2020 Nancy Silber

Nancy Silber, a former *PIO!* Song Editor, writes:

"This three-part round literally came to me in a dream. My father passed away at the age of ninety-eight this past fall, having outlived my mother by almost thirty years. In January, I had a dream that I was walking through my parents' house revisiting my old childhood bedroom, as well as unreal, fantasized rooms, including a hall with a beautiful, hardwood floor. I think the symbolism is obvious! It struck me how thankful I was to all that my parents had given me, and in my dream, I sang this song, over and over. I woke up in the middle of the night and wrote it down, word for word and note for note.

"I would like to share this round with CMNers, because it is simple, to the point, and can be sung at any moment of remembering, with gratitude, those who came before us. It is a round to be sung with reverence, gratitude, conviction, deep thought, and peacefulness."

We at CMN are so grateful that Nancy shared this gem.

To the Ones

words and music by Nancy Silber

©2020 Nancy Silber



1

To the ones who came be - fore us we

2

3

sing a grate - ful cho - rus: Thank you.

To the ones who came before us,
We sing a grateful chorus:
Thank you.



Put Your Mask On, Honey

words and music by *Stuart Stotts*¹
© 2020 Stuart Stotts

When Stuart shared his YouTube video, “Put Your Mask On Honey,” we knew we wanted to pass this song on! When asked, Stuart said:

“I wrote (this) just to have a fun way about thinking about this whole mask issue. I thought that if it were seen as fashionable, then maybe we’d all be more willing to wear what makes a difference in the long-term health of all of us. The original title was ‘The Accessory.’ An essential accessory.”

While we have notated the first verse as sung by Stuart, he explains, “It’s just kind of an adapted blues, really, kind of sliding all over the place rhythmically and melodically.” Stuart invites you to have fun with this song and adapt it to fit *your* situation.

1. <https://stuartstotts.com>

Put Your Mask On, Honey

words and music by Stuart Stotts
©2020 Stuart Stotts



Swing! ♩ = ♩³♩

Verse E

Well, you're star-ing at your clos-et, try-ing to de-cide
what you're gon-na wear when you go out-side. You've got a shirt, a skirt, pink
boots for your feet, but some-thing is mis-sing to make the out-fit com-plete.

E A

One thing a-bout you that you ad-ver-tise, is your u-nique a-bil-i-ty to

Chorus E

ac-ces-so-rize. Put your mask on hon-ey, That's what I say.

B7 E

Put your mask on hon-ey, if you go out to-day.

Bridge A

Well I got the mes-sage, and I'm a be-liev-er.

B **Instrumental** **D.C. al Fine 12**

You can be hot, and not get the fe-ver!

Verse:

You're staring at your closet, trying to decide,
What you're gonna wear when you go outside.
You've got a shirt, a skirt, pink boots for your feet,
But something is missing to make the outfit complete.
One thing about you that you advertise,
Is your unique ability to accessorize.

Chorus:

Put your mask on honey.
That's what I say.
Put your mask on honey,
If you go out today.

Nehru jacket, leopard skin, a thong, or a toga,
Pajama pants, leisure suit, leggings for yoga.
What you wear is your form of personal expression.
But when you get close you might need to wear protection.
There's a new trend, radical chic:
Over your mouth and your nose and your cheek.

Chorus

Bridge:

I got the message, and I'm a believer.
You can be hot, and not get the fever.

The models in Milan, Paris, and Rome,
Cover girls can cover up when they're not at home.
But you can use a scarf or a folded-up bandana.
You won't find one on the rack at Dolce and Gabbana.
It's the latest fashion of care and compassion.
Make it for yourself if it turns out they are rationed.

Chorus

We all know that what's in vogue is always gonna change.
We look back at photographs and clothes seem strange.
But I'll lay even money in fifteen years or more,
Masks will be the rage in the retro stores.
When this is over, and I can't say when,
Keep your mask handy 'cuz you might need it again.

Chorus



Rogers and Mr. McFeely (played by David Newell) on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*

2020 Magic Penny Award

by David Heitler-Klevans

The Children's Music Network is pleased to announce Fred Rogers as the 2020 Magic Penny recipient. Every year since 1999, the Magic Penny award has been given to people who have demonstrated lifetime achievement in the field of children's music. The first Magic Penny recipient was Malvina Reynolds, and the name of the award comes from one of her best-known songs. David Newell, who played postal deliverer Mr. McFeely (named after Fred's grandfather) on the *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* TV show, will accept this posthumous award on behalf of Rogers.

Fred McFeely Rogers was an American television personality, musician, puppeteer, writer, producer, and Presbyterian minister. He was the creator, showrunner, and host of the preschool television series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which ran from 1968 to 2001.

Born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, Rogers earned a bachelor's degree in music from Rollins College in 1951. He began his television career in 1951 at NBC in New York. He returned to Pittsburgh in 1953 to work for children's programming at NET (later PBS) television station WQED. After graduating from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, he became a Presbyterian minister in 1963 and attended the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Child Development, where he began his thirty-year-long collaboration with child psychologist Margaret McFarland. He also helped develop the children's shows *The Children's Corner* (1955) and *Mister Rogers* (1963). In 1968 he created *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which ran for thirty-three years. The program was critically acclaimed for focusing on children's emotional and physical concerns, such as death, sibling rivalry, school enrollment, and divorce.

Music is a very important part of Mr. Rogers' legacy. Fred Rogers wrote over 200 songs for children as well as 13 children's operas, and published 2 songbooks. Episodes of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* were often accompanied by the elegant piano of Johnny Costa, a nationally known jazz pianist. Francois Clemmons, who played the police officer on the TV show, is an opera singer, founder of the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble and has published African-American spirituals. Fred Rogers hosted many world-class musicians on his TV show, exposing children to excellent, varied music in the process. Guests included Yo-Yo Ma, Tony Bennett, Wynton Marsalis, Andre Watts, Hillary Hahn, and Itzhak Perlman.



Mr. Rogers at the piano in *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*

However, if you look on Mr. Rogers' website for his list of special guests, the very first one mentioned is not a famous adult, but a ten-year-old boy in a wheelchair. This speaks to one of the most important aspects of Fred Rogers, which is integrally connected to the mission of CMN: *he put children first*. The most important goal of his TV series was to "encourage children to feel good about themselves." He often told his young viewers that "you are the only person like you in the whole world," and "people can like you just because you're you." He authentically cared about children, and he listened carefully to children's expression of their thoughts and feelings. His quiet, gentle presence had an enormous positive impact on generations of children, parents, educators and musicians.

We will be honoring Fred Rogers with the Magic Penny award on Sunday, October 4, 2020 at this year's [CMN Annual International Conference](#)¹ in Leesburg, VA.

Much gratitude to the members of the CMN Magic Penny Committee—David Heitler-Klevans, Kathy Reid-Naiman, and Susan Salidor—for their efforts!

1. <https://childrensmusic.org/conference>

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children—serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



CMN members receive exclusive access to songs and to all issues of *Pass It On!* [Join Now](#)¹

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How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Songs

Most of the songs published in *Pass It On!* are contributed by CMN members, and we welcome songs written by people from various parts of the continent or the world. Please share your works with us.

Interested? Read our [guidelines for submission](#)⁸ to *Pass It On!*

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